

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 TRSE-00 SS-15 NSC-05 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02
/056 W

-----172123Z 090822 /46

R 172119Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0749
INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJECT: MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS PREVIEW OF ROUND TWO

REF: PARIS 7424

SUMMARY. SECOND ROUND OF VOTING, TO TAKE PLACE ON MARCH 20, WILL PIT SINGLE MAJORITY VERSUS UNITED LEFT LISTS IN 50 LARGE CITIES (OVER 30,000 POPULATION). SOME IMPORTANT FACTORS TO WATCH IN VOTING INCLUDE: HOW ECOLOGY VOTES GO IN DETERMINING CLOSE ELECTIONS; WHETHER OR NOT ABSTENTIONS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE; TO WHAT DEGREE PS VOTERS WILL SUPPORT PC CANDIDATES AND VICE VERSA; WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THE FINAL VOTE IS TAKEN BY THE UNION OF THE LEFT CANDIDATES, COMPARED TO THEIR APPROXIMATELY 52 PERCENT FIRST ROUND SCORE. END SUMMARY.

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1. WITH THE PASSING OF THE DEADLINE FOR PRESENTATION OF LISTS FOR THE SECOND ROUND OF VOTING, THERE WILL BE 50 LARGE CITIES (OVER 30,000 POPULATION) IN WHICH MAJORITY AND UNION OF THE LEFT LISTS OF CANDIDATES WILL FACE EACH OTHER. FOR THE MOST PART, THE LEFT OPPOSITION HAS MAINTAINED ITS UNITY, AGREEING TO PRESENT SINGLE LISTS IN ALMOST ALL CITIES WHERE THERE WERE HARD-FOUGHT

FIRST-ROUND "PRIMARIES" (AIX-EN-PROVENCE, MARSEILLE, TOULON, VILLEURBANNE), BUT IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW MANY PS VOTERS WILL VOTE FOR PC CANDIDATES AND VICE VERSA IN THESE "PRIMARY" CITIES. COHESION AND DESISTEMENT AMONG MAJORITY PARTIES HAVE BEEN WIDESPREAD BUT WITH SOME EXCEPTIONS; IN SUCH CITIES AS AJACCIO, ANNECY, SAINT-MALO AND SEVERAL SMALLER TOWNS, TWO MAJORITY LISTS WILL BE COMPETING AGAINST EACH OTHER, THEREBY THREATENING TO GIVE THESE ELECTIONS TO THE LEFT IN A THREE-WAY RUNOFF.

2. SEVERAL KEY CITIES WILL BE OF INTEREST: NICE, WHERE INCUMBENT MAYOR AND STATE SECRETARY JACQUES MEDECIN DID SURPRISINGLY POORLY IN FIRST-ROUND VOTING AND WHERE THE FINAL RESULTS WILL DEPEND ON ECOLOGY-JOBERTIST VOTES; LILLE, WHERE INCUMBENT PS MAYOR PIERRE MAUROY WILL PROBABLY WIN OVER PTT STATE SECRETARY SEGARD, TO SEE THE VOTING PATTERN OF THE FAR LEFT AND ECOLOGISTS (WHOSE CANDIDATES EACH WON 6 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN FIRST-ROUND BALLOTING); VILLEURBANNE, WHERE PS LEADER CHARLES HERNU NARROWLY DEFEATED THE PC CANDIDATE IN A PRIMARY, AND NEEDS PC SUPPORT IN SECOND ROUND; BEZIERS, BOURGES, NANTES, RENNES AND SAINT-ETIENNE, WHERE INCUMBENT MAJORITY MAYORS WERE BEHIND IN THE FIRST ROUND SCORE.

3. IN PARIS, CHIRAC AND D'ORNANO MET ON TUESDAY, WITH THE LATTER ATTEMPTING TO ARRIVE AT SOME COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT GIVING HIM THE ASSISTANT MAYOR'S POST (RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL USE

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SIBLE FOR THE BUDGET) IN RETURN FOR IR SUPPORT FOR
CHIRAC IN THE CITY COUNCIL VOTE FOR MAYOR. CHIRAC REFUS-
ED SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT AND THE ONLY ACCORD THAT WAS
REACHED WAS THAT EACH WOULD WITHDRAW HIS LIST IN THOSE
SECTORS WHERE THE OTHER HAD COME OUT AHEAD. THUS, CHI-
RAC'S LIST WILL OPPOSE LEFT CANDIDATES IN 10 SECTORS
WHILE D'ORNANO'S LISTS WILL LEAD THE MAJORITY IN 6
SECTORS. IN THE ONE ABERRATION, A CENTRIST (D'ORNANO)
CANDIDATE REFUSED TO WITHDRAW FROM THE RACE IN THE 8TH
ARRONDISSEMENT AGAINST COUVE DE MURVILLE -- WHERE THERE
IS NO LEFT CHALLENGER -- AND THUS THERE WILL BE ONE
DUEL BETWEEN CHIRAC AND D'ORNANO LISTS. THIS "UNAUTHOR-
IZED" CHALLENGE HAS ALREADY BEEN DISAVOWED BY D'ORNANO,
AND AS THE REBEL CANDIDATE WILL PROBABLY LOSE, THERE
SHOULD NOT BE ANY LONG-TERM REPERCUSSIONS.

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4. COMMENT: IN LIGHT OF FIRST ROUND LEFT GAINS, BOTH
MARCHAIS AND PARTICULARLY MITTERRAND ARE UTTERING RA-
THER MILD "VICTORY" STATEMENTS, PERHAPS A SIGN OF THEIR
CONFIDENCE IN THE OUTCOME OF NEXT SUNDAY'S TEST. IF
SECOND-ROUND VOTING CONFIRMS THE ALREADY POOR SHOWING
OF CENTRIST CANDIDATES, WE MIGHT ANTICIPATE FUTURE
GOVERNMENT CHANGES REFLECTING THIS ELECTORAL OUTCOME.
GAMMON

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